

powerfully impede the progress and cultivation of original design." They claim the Earl of Aberdeen as "one of their faithful organs," and triumphantly refer to a passage in his work in confirmation of their doctrine. It is to be regretted his lordship should have expressed any opinion that could afford a colour of support to those whose bad taste, narrow-minded bigotry, and exclusive pretensions, are sufficiently exposed by most of the public works of architecture and sculpture they have executed in the "southern metropolis" within the last half century.—works which totally disqualify them, even admitting they are the faithful organs of the public sentiment (of which there seems reason to doubt) from being "the most competent judges of art." How the restoration of the Parthenon, as the national monument of Scotland, should powerfully impede the progress and cultivation of original design, or interfere with the adaptation of modified Greek to ordinary buildings, is a paradox too palpable and absurd to require refutation. To be consistent, the Quarterly Reviewers, along with "the best informed artists and lovers of art in England," ought "to have opposed themselves" to the construction of the War-halls of Germany, which, as already remarked, is a Grecian temple after the Parthenon. If it be difficult, on the plea of ignorance and prejudice, to find an excuse for the perverted taste of two architects like Sir William Chambers and Mr. Elmes, what can be alleged in palliation of the paradoxes of the Quarterly Reviewers and their distant friends. Can we really believe these gentlemen were sincere in taking so deep an interest in our national monument? Were they and their artistic friends not rather actuated on this occasion by a slight ebullition of jealousy, lest the successful completion of the structure and decorations should eclipse the architectural glories of the southern metropolis, not excepting the Athenian St. Pancras, with its double Pandrosium, and the boasted facade of Regent-street.

Though England was the first to bring to light the treasures of Grecian art by the publication of Stuart's and Revett's works, she has been the last to benefit by them. While France and Germany have raised noble examples of the Grecian Temple on its full scale, and in all its massive grandeur and rich decoration, England has not produced one building entitled to the appellation of Grecian, either in composition, materials, dimension, or decoration. Her Anglo-Greek practice has extended no farther than attaching porticoes indiscriminately to every building, whether a church, a theatre, a palace, a club-house, or a jail,—nay, even to ~~any~~ ^{any} ~~seats~~ ^{seats}, railway tunnels, markets, and fish-stalls. Nor can this excite surprise after the doctrines and principles so dogmatically inculcated by her writers and professional men:—"It is an easy matter," says Blackwood, "for the citizens of London, revelling in their superior wealth, and in possession of the seat of government, to deride the twelve columns, the fragment of a mighty undertaking, on the Calton-hill. These twelve columns, formed on the purest and chastest model, are the same benefit to the arts and the public taste which the poems of Virgil and Homer are to literature: they will exist, if not destroyed by external violence, for thousands of years, and will be admired when the meretricious piles of London are reduced to heaps of their mother clay. Even now, they are the most imposing objects of the kind in Britain. They surprise strangers more than any other edifice of the island; and if the structure is completed, by the munificence of donations and bequests, on the same scale of magnificence, it will give to the Scottish metropolis a distinction beyond what any capital of Europe can boast."

The following passage is from an able and interesting article, on the same subject, in *Blackwood's Magazine* so far back as 1819:—

"When we earnestly wish to impress upon the public attention, therefore, the propriety of selecting the Parthenon as the model for the National Monument, we do it, not from any blind partiality for ancient art, or from any propensity to under-

value the genius of contemporary artists, but from a sober survey of the causes which have led to the eminence of art in other states, and by which the celebrity of our own literature and poetry has been created. We cannot forget that the works of antiquity were restored, and their spirit diffused over Europe, before the "Jerusalem Delivered" or the "Pamela Lost" were written. It is from a wish to obtain similar advantages for the arts in this country that we press so earnestly for the restoration of the most perfect edifice of antiquity in the National Monument. It is just because we have the highest opinion of the genius of our own artists that we could wish to give them the immense advantage of having the finest monument of ancient art continually before their eyes. It is by such habitual contemplation, more than by the hurried impression of a transient visit, that the spirit of ancient excellence is to be inhaled; and could they obtain, in this way, the advantages which the Italian artists have derived from the study of the Parthenon and the Colosseum, we have not the slightest doubt that the genius of this country would rival the architecture, as it has long done the poetry of Italy. Such a measure would be the same service to the arts in this country that the restoration of Virgil and Cicero were to the poetry and eloquence of Europe. It is not to be forgotten that, till such an edifice is erected, the influence of the magnificent ruins of Athens is as much lost towards forming the public taste in this country, as the *Almid* or the *Orations* of Cicero would have been had they still remained undiscovered amidst the rubbish of the monastic libraries; and, were it accomplished, we are sanguine enough to imagine that the genius of Britain would make the same addition to the simplicity of the Grecian original, that the fancy of Tasso or Milton did to the poetry of Greece and Rome. But if the present opportunity be suffered to escape, it is impossible to say when an opportunity may again occur of adorning our northern metropolis with this matchless edifice, or of transferring to its inhabitants the taste which grew up in Athens round the works of Phidias. Centuries may revolve before another similar opportunity occurs; and never, perhaps, in the future history of this country, will it fall to the lot of its inhabitants to erect a building in which public feeling will be so deeply and universally interested.

The influence which an ornamental edifice exercises upon the public taste is almost beyond the power of estimation. Whether it is good or bad—it must stand for centuries, and determine the taste of those who view it when the name even of its original author is forgotten. Of what incalculable importance then to choose well the design of an edifice from which such important effects upon the national taste must follow. The genius of Michelangelo, and Bramante, has sought in vain to deviate from the rules which the Athenian edifices have established; and at this day men of all descriptions, differing from one another in every other subject of human thought, unite in admiration of their unequalled beauty, and, forgetting the rivalries of nations, meet in the ruins of the Acropolis to do homage to that perfection of design which, for above 2,000 years, has stood unrivalled among the works of men. In suggesting, therefore, the Parthenon as the model of the National Monument, we are not presumptuously setting up our own opinion above that of our contemporaries infinitely better qualified to judge of the subject than ourselves. It is just because we distrust our own opinion, and are strongly impressed with the importance of selecting an unexceptionable model, that we make the suggestion; trusting in support of our opinion to the united suffrages of the greatest men whom the world has ever seen, and the concurring opinion of twenty centuries on the only subject, perhaps, in which perfect unanimity is to be found in the whole history of human affairs."

But, besides giving a powerful impulse to architecture and the sister arts of sculpture and painting, its completion, by commemorating the great men and warlike achievements of Scotland, will effect another national and most important object: it will reanimate and keep alive that patriotic independence and martial spirit for which our countrymen were so distinguished, when Scotland was an independent kingdom, but which is apt to die away when united to a larger and richer kingdom like England.

The embellishment of the Scottish capital ought to be a matter of national and general interest. Nothing contributes so much to sustain the renown and prosperity of a country, to improve the taste, and elevate the character of its inhabitants, as the possession of great and distinguished monuments of art. The ruins of Athens still attract admiration

from all quarters of the world. Modern Rome and the cities of Italy owe their celebrity almost entirely to their works of ancient and modern art. Had it not been for her remains of ancient grandeur, Rome herself would have irretrievably sunk under her civil wars and accumulated disasters. It were needless to dwell on the advantages of restoring one of the most admired works of antiquity, as a standard of permanent attraction, which would survive the fluctuating fashions of the day, and remain a model of taste to future generations. In the fine arts, more especially architecture and sculpture, the models and great works are confined to certain localities, beyond which their influence is little felt.

But it must not be supposed that those who advocate the restoration of the Parthenon are so bigotted in their admiration of the pure Greek as to think it could be adapted to all kinds of buildings. The very selection of the Parthenon implies the reverse; that they think it is only suitable for those structures of national grandeur which will admit of being executed on their full scale of dimensions, and with all their requisite decorations. To apply the temple on a reduced scale to ordinary buildings is sure to terminate in failure. This it is, however, very possible to compose a mixed Greek, adapted to a certain description of modern edifices, is exemplified in the Glyptothec of Munich, with its beautiful portico, and the Museum of Berlin, with its noble colonnade of eighteen columns; to which may be added the High School of Edinburgh on the Calton Hill. In none of these buildings the arch introduced. For the generality of public buildings and street architecture, the Roman and Italian styles are the most appropriate.

The want of a Gallery of Honour or National Monument for monumental statues and busts is beginning to be felt by the sister kingdom. Nor can the English people shut their eyes to the incongruous anomaly, if not desecration, of transforming their two great metropolitan churches of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey into depositories of purely secular monuments of statesmen, warriors, philosophers, poets, artists, &c. huddled together without order, consistency, or propriety, and utterly destitute of all religious character—of the slightest allusions to the Christian's hope of a future life. Any stranger who should for the first time visit St. Paul's Cathedral, after observing the numerous statues and medallions, with the figures of Mars and Victory, of Neptune and Fame, with all their attendant lions, tigers, cannons, flags, and blood-stained standards, might well be excused if he supposed himself in a Pantheon of military honour, or temple dedicated to Mars. No country can boast a greater number of distinguished and illustrious men than Great Britain, but no country has done so little to honour their name or perpetuate their fame. "Why," exclaims Mr. Edwards, "are the testimonials of national gratitude delayed till their object is insensible to the glory they confer?"

Some malicious persons there are belonging to a class opposed to everything national and patriotic, who have presumed to assert that the National Monument can be regarded in no other light than a monument dedicated to war and the horrors of war. The very reverse is the truth. Like its great prototype on the Acropolis of Athens, its original object was in reality a monument not merely in commemoration of British and Scottish achievements, including the signal victories of the British arms by sea and land in the last war, but in celebration of peace, prosperity, and independence, the consequences of the glorious and triumphant termination of a long and calamitous war, in which Great Britain fought single-handed against Europe for the preservation of her laws, her liberties, and her altars.

No dishonour could have attached to Scotland, any more than to England, for not raising a National Monument. But after all her pledges, meetings, and resolutions; after all her pretensions, and prospectuses for so many years, not confined to the British Islands, but

* "Edwards' Administrative Economy of the Fine Arts of England."

* *Blackwood's Magazine*, No. CCL.—Article on British Architecture.